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NOTICES OF NEW BOOKS.

Das Problem des absoluten Raumes und seine Beziehung zum allgemeinen Raumproblem. Von ALOYS MÜLLER. Braunschweig, Vieweg & Sohn, 1911.—pp. vii, 154.

The object of this book, which is addressed both to philosophers and to scientists, is to discuss the rôle and justification of absolute space in physics, and the logical structure of the concept involved.

Part I investigates the problem of absolute and relative motion, from an epistemologically neutral standpoint. This is a standpoint which assumes the *fact* of the subject-object relation, but does not inquire into its nature or reason. This is the point of view of the older physics. Absolute space is here defined as such a space as would permit the ascription of rest or motion (of rotation) to a Neumann (*i. e.*, an absolutely isolated) body. It results that only relative motion (motion with respect to a reference body) is knowable or measurable. This is sufficient as far as pure kinematics is concerned. Not so in the case of dynamics. The principle of inertia is inapplicable unless axes of zero inertia, a so-called inertial system, can be found. This is tantamount to saying that the the motions of dynamics must be referred to *absolute* space, in the sense defined above. This version Müller calls the phoronomic dynamic concept. Such an inertial system is ideal. Practically we can only approximate to it by finding, with reference to the stars, axes that may be taken as fixed, without sensible error. This is the business of the astronomer. Accepting the modern result, that the sidereal universe is a finite system, Müller points out that it constitutes itself a Neumann body, to which we may properly assign motion. But though from the laws of mechanics, its rotation may be determined, its translation is indeterminable, yet not inconceivable. This leads to the further concept of absolute *physical* space, which would permit the ascription of translation to a Neumann body. Such a space possesses a reality of its own independent of bodies. Absolute motion, or motion with respect to space, is hence a limiting case of relative motion. Absolute space is the essential condition of the latter. By vitrue of the principle of superposition, the application of the principle of inertia does not require a knowledge of absolute translation, but only of absolute rotation. The conclusion is therefore reached, that the phoronomic dynamic, but not the physical, concept of absolute space, is essential to a complete and consistent system of dynamics.

Part II now assumes that the correct epistemological standpoint must lie somewhere between naïve realism and absolute idealism. Things as they appear to us are neither wholly objective nor wholly subjective. Their general qualities may be the latter, but there must be some absolute basis in reality for what Müller calls the concrete determination of things. To every relative motion, which is subjective, there must correspond an absolute motion, which is real. The latter may in itself be unspatial, may consist merely of certain space-factors, as Müller calls them. (This view reminds one strongly of Helmholtz.)

Space is independent of things, but physics everywhere shows the complete dependence of things upon space. Space actually affects them. Müller goes further and suggests that even their very existence may depend upon space. Things may be a sort of "Emanation" of the absolute space-factors.

A strong support for this theory Müller finds in certain recent physical investigations. Kaufmann has shown that the mass of an electron depends upon its velocity. Planck's interpretation of the Michelson-Morley experiment seems to show that the very dimensions of a body depend upon its motion with respect to the ether. At the same time the electro-magnetic theory has shorn the ether of all those astounding physical qualities once thought so essential. There remains but one further step to make,—to identify the ether with absolute space. This would give the most complete and unified view of the physical universe.

In the concluding chapter is discussed the possible utility of the adoption of a Non-Euclidean Geometry. It would remove the antinomies concerning the infinity of space, and would explain the deformation of bodies with their motion, required by Planck's theories.

Two appendices and an excellent list of literature complete the work.

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Kant's Critique of Æsthetic Judgment. Translated, with seven Introductory Essays, Notes, and Analytical Index by JAMES CREED MEREDITH. Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1911.—pp. clxx, 333.

This work contains a translation of the Preface, Introduction, and First Part (*Kritik der ästhetischen Urteilskraft*) of Kant's *Critique of Judgment.* The translator has contributed to the volume also seven Introductory Essays which are entitled as follows: "Problem of the Critique of Judgment," "Last Stages in the Development of Kant's Critique of Taste," "The Beautiful," "The Sublime," "Interest in Beauty," "Art and the Artist," "The Dialectic."

The translation has evidently been made with the greatest care. The translator has endeavored to find an English equivalent for Kant's technical and semi-technical terms and has used the term chosen consistently throughout. In certain cases this has led to a slight violation of ordinary English usage, as for example the rendering of *beurteilen* by 'estimate' (to distinguish it from *urteilen,* 'to judge') and of *Zweckmässigkeit* by 'finality.' But in these cases the reason for the peculiar usage has been frankly stated in the notes and the unusual sense of the English word explained; the translator has scrupulously avoided the use of these words in their ordinary senses in his essays and notes. All things considered, the advantage of having a distinct English term for each of Kant's terms probably outweighs the awkwardness of using ordinary